Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

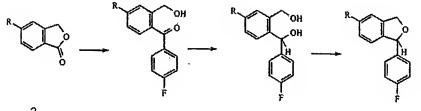
Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of a 5-substituted-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-1,3- dihydroisobenzofuran comprising:

(a) carrying out a Grignard reaction on a 5-substituted phthalide in a co-solvent system, comprising adding 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide in an ether solvent to a 5-substituted phthalide in an organic co-solvent to the ether solvent, to form a 4-substituted- 2-hydroxymethyl-4'-fluorobenzophenone 4,

(b) carrying out a ketone reduction of the 4-substituted-2-hydroxymethyl- 4'-fluorobenzophenone 4 following the Grignard reaction, to form a 4-substituted-2-hydroxymethylphenyl-1-(4-fluorophenyl) methanol, and

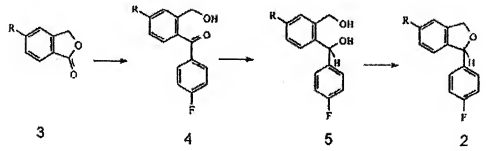
(c) carrying out a cyclisation reaction on the 4-substituted- 2-hydroxymethylphenyl-1-(4-fluorophenyl) methanol following the reduction reaction, to form a compound having the structure:



wherein R represents Br or CN.

2. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the co-solvent is selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic chlorinated solvent, an aromatic chlorinated solvent and an aromatic hydrocarbon.

3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein the co-solvent is an aliphatic or aromatic chlorinated solvent selected from the group consisting



of methylene dichloride, ethylene dichloride, trichloroethane, carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, chlorobenzene, dichlorobenzene, and mixtures thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 3, wherein the co-solvent is at least one of methylene dichloride and chloroform.

5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein the co-solvent is an aromatic hydrocarbon selected from the group consisting of toluene, benzene, xylene, and mixtures thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the ether solvent and co-solvent are both dry.

7. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the volumetric ratio of ether solvent to co-solvent is between 3:10 and 6:7.

8. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the ether solvent is selected from the group consisting of 1,4-dioxane, diethylether, dimethoxyethane and tetrahydrofuran (THF).

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein in the ketone reduction step (b), between 0.25 and 1.0 molar equivalents of sodium borohydride are used as reducing agent.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein in the ketone reduction step (b), 0.5 molar equivalents of sodium borohydride are used as reducing agent.

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the cyclisation reaction (c) comprises the use of concentrated hydrochloric acid or an organic acid selected from the group consisting of methanesulfonic acid, benzenesulfonic acid and para-toluene sulfonic acid (PTSA).

12. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the acid is used in a catalytic amount.

13. (Original) A process according to claim 12, wherein the acid is PTSA in a catalytic amount of 5 to 10% w/w with respect to the 5-substituted phthalide.

14. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the Grignard reaction (a) is carried out at a temperature of from -6°C to -2°C.

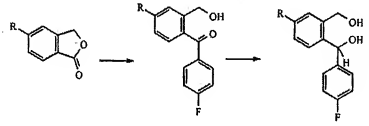
15. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein in the Grignard reaction (a), the molar ratio of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide to 5-substituted phthalide is 1:1 to 1.4:1.

16. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the entire process, comprising Grignard reaction (a), reduction reaction (b) and cyclisation reaction (c), is carried out in a reaction vessel without isolation of intermediates from solution.

17. (Previously Presented) A process for preparation of 4-bromo-2-hydroxymethylphenyl-l-(4-fluorophenyl) methanol or 4-cyano-2-hydroxymethylpheny-l-(4-fluorophenyl) methanol comprising:

(a) carrying out a Grignard reaction on a 5-substituted phthalide in a co-solvent system, comprising adding- 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide in an ether solvent to a 5-substituted phthalide in a suitable organic co-solvent to the ether solvent, to form a 4-substituted-2-hydroxymethyl-4'-fluorobenzophenone, and

(b) carrying out a ketone reduction of the 4-substituted- 2-hydroxymethyl-4'-



fluorobenzophenone with sodium borohydride, to form a compound having the structure:

wherein R represents Br or CN.